

# Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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## MBCB officers, exec. committee chosen

Members of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) elected officers during their organizational meeting in the chapel of the Baptist Building in Jackson, immediately after the November 1 adjournment of the 2000 Mississippi Baptist Convention annual meeting. Board officers for the coming year are Sandra Gunn, member of First Church, Biloxi, secretary; Gary

Richardson, pastor of First Church, West Point, president; and Wayne VanHorn, pastor, First Church, Columbia, vice-president. Board members also elected the executive committee for the coming year, as listed below. Executive committee members will elect officers when they meet for the first time on December 5. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST  
CONVENTION BOARD  
2001 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

*Gary Bunch, pastor  
Woodville Church, Woodville*

*Jim Butler, pastor  
Trinity Church, Southaven*

*Kent Cochran, pastor  
Pleasant Grove, Brookhaven*

*Clarence Cooper, pastor  
Emmanuel Church, Grenada*

*Sandra Gunn, member  
First Church, Biloxi*

*Frank Harmon, pastor  
First Church, Newton*

*Dan Howard, pastor  
First Church, Philadelphia*

*Ricky Kennedy, pastor  
East McComb Church, McComb*



NEW MBCB OFFICERS — Officers of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) elected Nov. 1 include (from left) Sandra Gunn, member of First Church, Biloxi, secretary; Gary Richardson, pastor of First Church, West Point, president; and Wayne VanHorn, pastor of First Church, Columbia, vice-president. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

*Bobby Kirk, member  
Roundaway Church, Doddsville*

*Jim Ray, pastor  
Bunker Hill Church, Columbia*

*Gary Richardson, pastor  
First Church, West Point*

*John Sapp, pastor  
First Church, Collins*

*Dell Scoper, member  
First Church, Laurel*

*Wayne VanHorn, pastor  
First Church, Columbia*

*Michael Weeks, pastor  
Pleasant Hill, Olive Branch*

*Kiely Young, member  
Michael Memorial Church,  
Gulfport*

*Source: Office of the Executive  
Director-Treasurer, MBCB*

## Pollard: be confident when preaching the Gospel

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — To be a great man for God, a Christian minister should always remember where he came from, know why he is preaching the Gospel, and continuously point to Christ as the one whom he has come to proclaim, Frank Pollard said Nov. 9 at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Pollard, pastor of First Church, Jackson, used John the Baptist in John 1:6 as an example of "a great Baptist," and a role model for the man of God.

"There was greatness in him (John the Baptist) the Scriptures tell us," Pollard said. "Wherever you are the rest of your life, I pray it is a place that you can say with confidence, 'God put me here.'

"For there will be times in ministry when you are challenged and you [will] need to be like Moses to be able to stand and say to Pharaoh, 'I am here because God sent me and God put me here.'"

Pollard said a minister needs to always be aware of his calling so that when he is buffeted by doubt and Satanic attack, his confidence will be in God and not in himself.

"I pray that as you get up on Sunday

and Satan begins to say those things [like], 'What right do you have to tell anybody anything?' or 'Who are you to have a right to preach to people?' or 'Look at what you've done, look at who you are, look at how much of a sinful person you are,' and you can say, 'I am here because God put me here.' You will be like John the Baptist because he was a man who knew where he came from," Pollard said.

Pollard spoke of the many changes that enter a person's life from year to year. He compared life's ever-changing nature to the IBM Corporation, a company that recruited him after Pollard completed a business degree.

In those days, IBM's most advanced machines were calculators and punch-card mechanisms. In the years since, IBM has become a leading player in the age of microcomputer. Though

changes can come to ministry that are just as profound as those at IBM, a minister must keep God at the center, Pollard said.

"The changes that come in life are a lot like that," he said. "But the person who has real confidence and gets through it is not the person that has self-confidence. That is

a fake kind of confidence. The real person with confidence is the one who has God-confidence, who knows that God has put him there and that he is following God."

Pollard also held up the apostle Paul as an example of a biblical persona who stayed true to his calling despite undergoing massive persecution and opposition. Following his conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul preached the gospel without regard for his own safety and prosperity because he was a man who knew his mission, Pollard said.

"There is power in knowing what you came for," he said.

Pollard recalled an event at Southern Seminary several years ago in which Billy Graham was preaching. Pollard himself was scheduled to speak just ahead of the famous evangelist who, as the featured speaker, was to close the meeting. Prior to the beginning of the service, Graham approached Pollard and asked him to go last.

When Pollard gave an altar call, he said Graham was the first to respond.

Said Pollard, "He got on his face, not on his knees, but on his face at this altar and I could hear him praying, 'Oh, God, use me for your honor and your glory.' This was at the peak of his (Graham's) popularity. I pray we'd all do that, that we'll all decide to follow a man who knew where he came from, who knew what he came for, and knew who to point to."



Pollard

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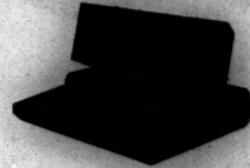
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# Giving thanks where thanks is due

Among the original American Holidays on our calendar, Thanksgiving often harbors our warmest thoughts and deepest sentimentalities.

The World Book Encyclopedia puts it this way: "Thanksgiving is usually a family day, celebrated with big dinners and joyous reunions. The very mention of Thanksgiving often calls up memories of kitchens and pantries crowded with good things to eat. Thanksgiving is also a time for serious thinking, church services, and prayer."

Indeed it is. In our present day, politically-correct/revisionist culture, we can be discouraged from understanding the true meaning of the holiday.

We are induced to believe that Thanksgiving is little more than a bacchanalian orgy and football games, devoid of religious significance.

Nothing could be farther from the truth, as evidenced by a brief review of unrevised history.

The first Thanksgiving was observed less than a year after the Plymouth colonists came ashore in Massachusetts.

The harsh first winter in the New World wiped out nearly half the colonists, but 1621's bumper harvest put an end to the famine and its associated problems.

There was such rejoicing in the colony that the people began to set aside a time of celebration and thanksgiving for their abundance — which they readily acknowledged came from God.

The observance grew so rapidly that Massachusetts Governor William Bradford declared a formal three-day thanksgiving feast to begin on July 30, 1623.

Thanksgiving quickly took root in the other colonies and continued to be observed during the Revolutionary War.

After the Revolutionary War, President George Washington issued a proclamation that codified a special day of thanks in the United States. Most of the states took Washington's lead and adopted their own days of thanksgiving

People need the Lord. This is true all over the world. Our job as Christians is to try to reach them with the Word and to tell them about Jesus. It is especially important that we take advantage of the opportunity when the door opens to an area in the world that has been closed in the past. Ukraine is one those areas that is now open and is hungry for the Lord.

It was my privilege to spend a month in Ukraine with three other students from Baptist-affiliated William Carey College in Hattiesburg, where I am a senior. Our assignment was to assist with a children's camp that was held in two ten-day sessions. The first group was preteen and the second group was teenage youth. Most of the people at the camp spoke Russian and a few also spoke Ukrainian. Many of the children spoke a little English, but most of our communication was through an interpreter. About 75 children and youth repented and accepted Jesus during the camps.

We helped with sports activities, went to the beach with the children, supplied some of their crafts, and just did whatever they were doing. In the evening worship time we presented skits,



at various times in the year.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln declared a national Thanksgiving holiday on the fourth Thursday of November, and the states soon realigned their observances.

President Franklin Roosevelt set the holiday one week earlier in 1939, to lengthen the Christmas shopping season in the midst of the Great Depression.

The U.S. Congress was not pleased, however, voting in 1941 to return Thanksgiving to the traditional fourth Thursday in November and backing up its decision by creating a formal legal holiday on that date.

For thousands of years, people around the world have held harvest festivals and observed thanksgiving times for the gift of God's bounty, but this uniquely American holiday called Thanksgiving should hold special meaning for us, the modern-day benefactors of God's blessings beyond all

forms of measurement.

Our agricultural system feeds us, with enough left over to feed the world. More than at any time in our history, our generation is sheltered from the elements and guarded from disease and enemy attack.

We make a grave mistake, however, when we take all that for granted and begin to believe that we are responsible for our own good fortune (Deut. 8:6-19), as some many Americans today apparently assume.

This Thanksgiving Season, be sure to focus your thanks toward the One who provided the food you will eat, the home in which you will eat it, the family with whom you will enjoy it, and the means to do all of that and much, much more.

Come to think of it, that should be our thanksgiving prayer 365 days a year.

*Adapted and expanded from an editorial originally published in the issue of November 21, 1996.*

## GUEST OPINION:

### God's Open Door

By Pat Sullivan, member  
Mt. Olive Church, Mt. Olive

sang with them, and gave testimonies. The best part of our job was just to love those children. We wanted them to know that

we love them because God loves us all. Another part of our participation was to show that Christians are not all stupid and



Sullivan on a recent mission trip to Ukraine

ignorant as the Communists have portrayed them to be. I hope we were able to help change that image just a little. The Ukrainians have also been taught that no one cares about them except the Communist Party. Our willingness to travel halfway around the world and to pay our own way helped show that we really care.

Short-term mission teams are spreading God's Word all around the world. You do not have to be a preacher or professional to work for the Lord. It does not matter if you are young or old. Even grandmothers such as I have many opportunities. There are jobs for all who make themselves available to serve.

This was an experience that none of us will ever forget. If you want to strengthen your own faith as we did, go and share it with Ukraine. We do not know how long the door will be open for us to be a part of this work. God has given this moment in history to reach out for him. Will you let your answer be, "Here I am Lord. Send me."

*Sullivan is a full-time student at William Carey College in Hattiesburg and a Mississippi Service Corps volunteer.*

# New missionaries appointed in Portland

PORLAND, Ore. (BP) — Just being around international missionaries can be vocally contagious.

Take, for instance, the case of one International Mission Board (IMB) trustee from a pioneer state. For the past three years, this trustee has helped write policy and voted on budgets and other matters for Southern Baptist Convention missionaries serving overseas.

After attending 20 missionary appointment services in which she voted to send hundreds of others overseas, the trustee and her husband were appointed Nov. 7 in Portland, Ore., to serve among a people group with little or no access to the good news of salvation in Christ.

Then there's Julie Bannert from Texas. She grew up in a pastor's home in which visiting

missionaries often stayed.

"God put a love for missions in my heart through their stories and testimonies," she says.

Bannert, too, was appointed Nov. 7, in Portland. She and her husband, Karl, will serve in Bosnia.

Such exposure to missionaries is one of the numerous reasons why the IMB holds appointment services for new missionaries in various parts of the U.S. every two months or so. By rotating coast to coast, north to south, and different areas in between, the board provides Southern Baptists an opportunity to "reach out and touch" its missionaries.

On the night of the nation's Nov. 7 elections, the IMB appointed 33 new missionaries in the opening service for the Northwest Baptist Convention in Portland, Ore. An additional

seven missionary apprentices also participated in the service. (Apprentices lack the experience required for career missionary appointment and are sent overseas for three years to gain on-the-job training.)

While Americans nationwide stayed glued to their television sets for the cliffhanger presidential election, Northwest Baptists turned out in record numbers to witness the appointment service, which included yet another of their own about how God called them to overseas for missionary service overseas.

In the service, audience members watched as one of their own became the 151st person sent overseas from the Northwest Baptist Convention, often thought of as a pioneer region outside more traditional Southern Baptist locales. The new missionary will serve in an area where traditional missionaries are not welcome.

Audience members beamed with joy at sending yet another of their number overseas. To find a facility large enough to hold the crowd, estimated at 1,900, a large nondenominational church in the area was rented for the services.

Another new missionary, Diane Marsh, linked serving in a pioneer area in the United States with serving overseas.

"Twenty years ago I served as a summer missionary to the Northwest Baptist Convention," she told the audience. "During that summer, God made clear to me that I was to teach."

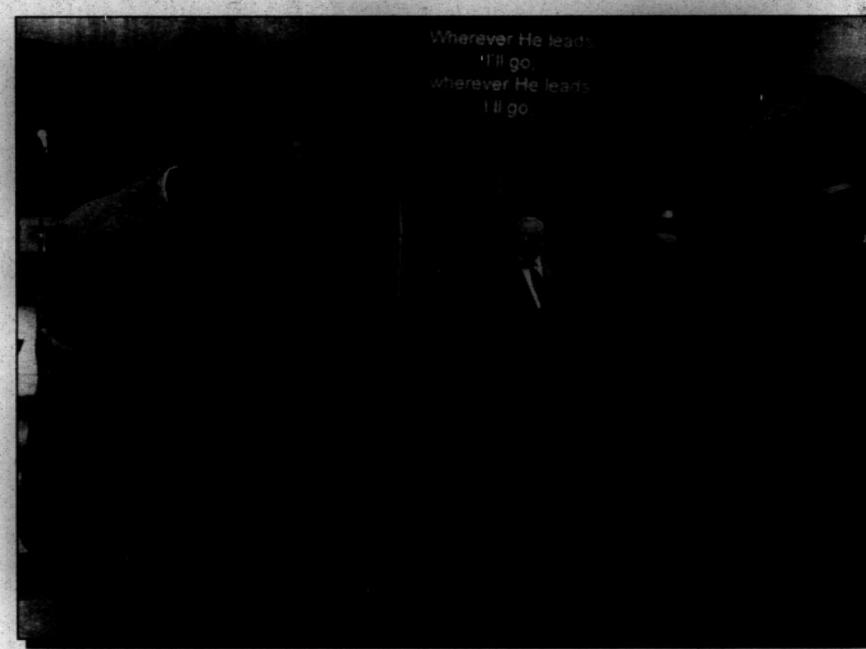
"Content in this career, just 16 months ago I had no idea what the Lord had in store. Then one day in the middle of a crowd of thousands, God spoke quietly to my heart and called me to full-time service in missions."

"Knowing that I had no choice but to follow his lead wholeheartedly, I did wonder how he would use me overseas."



TESTIFY — Al and Carolyn Hoopes of Celebration Church in Euless, Texas, testify about how God called them to overseas for missionary service overseas. They will help craft strategies for taking the good news of God's love to a people group in the Philippines. (BP photo by Sandy King)

Wherever He leads,  
I'll go.  
wherever He leads  
I'll go.



WILLING TO FOLLOW — A missionary appointment service Nov. 7 in Portland, Ore., challenged Southern Baptists in the Pacific Northwest to capture for themselves the love God has for the world's people groups — and respond in obedience to Him. During the invitation that closed the service, International Mission Board staff members counseled people who wanted to follow wherever God leads them. (BP photo by Sandy King)

## Prayer meeting erupts

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (BP) — Dozens of Christians from across the city spontaneously gathered at the state capitol Thursday night to pray for the nation, the two presidential candidates, and judges who could decide the fate of the 2000 presidential election. Jerry Garrard, senior pastor of Celebration Church and a past president of the Florida Baptist Convention, told Baptist Press the prayer meeting developed following a Promise Keepers event in downtown Tallahassee at First Church. "After the meeting was over, many of us got together and felt the Lord leading us to go and pray at the state capitol," Garrard said. "Once we got to the capitol plaza, a group of ladies walked up to us and said that God had told them to come to Tallahassee and pray for the city." While praying in the darkness and mist, Garrard said even more people came. "It turned out to be just a sweet time of prayer," he said.

Garrard said Southern Baptists and other evangelical churches in Tallahassee have stepped up their prayer efforts since the election crisis began on Nov. 8. "People are aware that it is in the hands of the Lord," he said. "We have been driven to our knees and prayer closets and now we are being driven to conduct public prayer meetings. This is more than just about a vote. This is about the spiritual health of our nation." More Christians are expected to meet Friday afternoon in a gathering called by an interdenominational group of pastors and clergy. The non-partisan, non-political event is designed to bring the Christian community together for a time of prayer, Garrard said.



## THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

# Record

THE BAPTIST

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## Looking back

10 years ago

The merger of Benton and Tippah Associations in north Mississippi becomes a reality when the two associations voted to become one. Bill McCreary, who will serve as associational director of the new group, called the merger "a positive step forward for the work of our Lord."

20 years ago

A record 1,422 messengers attend the 1980 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. After voting down a substitute motion that would have allowed Clarke College in Newton to move to senior college status, they approve the merging of Clarke with Mississippi College in Clinton.

50 years ago

Purser Hewitt, managing editor of the Clarion-Ledger newspaper in Jackson, is elected president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. Hewitt tells the messengers, "My complete unworthiness makes deeper my appreciation of the honor you have paid me."

SENT OUT — Barry and Lisa Swanson of Tyler, Texas, accept congratulations from Jerry Rankin, president of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, after their appointment Nov. 7 as Southern Baptist representatives to Scotland. (BP photo by Sandy King)

# Miss. CBF elects Allison as new moderator

By Jim Newton  
MCBF correspondent

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Mississippi (MCBF) elected Jane Allison of Hattiesburg as its new moderator and heard the moderator-elect for the national Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) warn that the fellowship needs a new organizational structure for the 21st century, during the Oct. 27-28 MCBF Fall Assembly at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian.

Keynote speaker James Baucom, pastor of Riverside Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, said that the current CBF organizational structure is not adequate. "From an organizational perspective, CBF looks an awful lot like SBC (Southern Baptist Convention)," Baucom observed.

He explained that CBF was organized in 1992 by former leaders of the SBC who based the organizational structure on Baptist principles and traditions of the 20th century. "Our values are deeply buried in our processes and organizations of the past," he said.

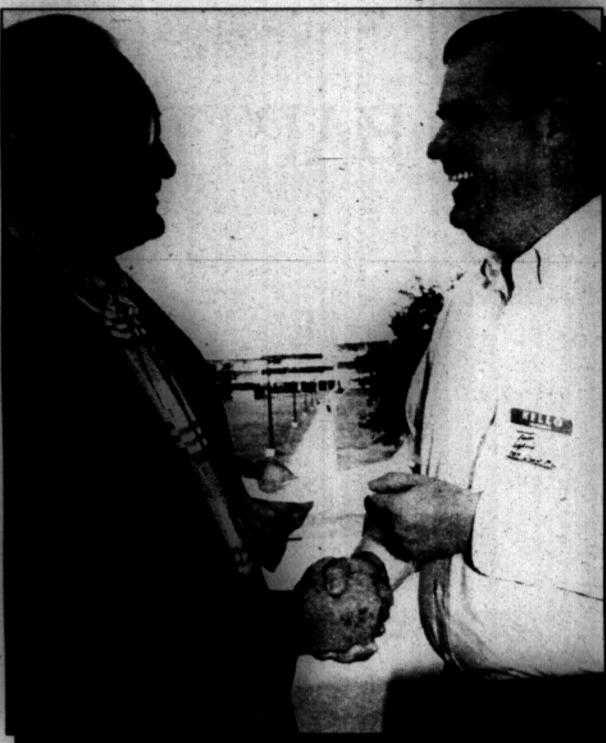
We will not be free to become the church of the 21st century until we are willing to give up the traditions of the 20th century," Baucom said.

He said Baptists need to ask themselves two key questions when facing change: "What do we believe?" and "What do we value?" Whatever organizational structure is developed in the future for CBF needs to "flow out of our values and beliefs," he said.

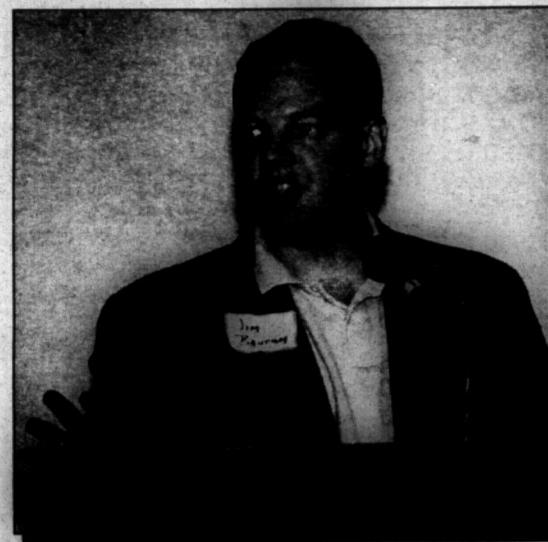
The theme for the assembly was "The Church in the 21st century."

In addition to Allison, the assembly elected Steve Street, bivocational pastor of Rivercrest Fellowship in Madison, as moderator-elect to serve in 2001-02. Ken Redford of Clinton is the outgoing moderator.

The assembly commissioned a Mississippi couple from Long Beach, Michael and Lynn Hutchinson, as global missionaries to work with internationals in



MISSIONS GIFT — Tom Ogburn (right), associate coordinator of global missions for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), presents a check for \$6,250 to support Mississippi missions to Richard Brogan, state missions consultant for Mississippi CBF, during the state CBF Fall Assembly at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian. (Photo by Jim Newton)



Baucom

Paris, France. For 12 years, they were missionaries to West Africa under the SBC International Mission Board.

James and Robbi Francovich, CBF global missionaries who work with the Banjara Gypsies in India, thanked Mississippi Baptists for their prayers and financial support. Mississippi CBF has "adopted" five missionary couples who work with the gypsy people in different parts of the world.

There are 20 million Banjara gypsies in India with their own distinctive culture and language. Since most of them cannot read or write, the Francoviches are using audio visual materials and story telling to communicate the gospel, and are training young Banjara men to reach their own people through a school of evangelism and seminary. Their ministry also includes medical clinics, economic development, and job training programs.

Tom Ogburn, who moderator of the Mississippi Cooperative Baptist Fellowship coordinates the Adopt-A-People program for the recent state CBF Fall Assembly. (Photo by Jim Newton)

CBF Global Missions, expressed appreciation for what MCBF is doing to support global missions, and pledged the support of his office in partnership with MCBF.

He presented a check for \$6,250 as the first installment of a two-year commitment by CBF Global Missions to support missions projects in three counties in the Mississippi Delta which rank among the 20 poorest counties in America.

Richard Brogan, Mississippi missions consultant for MCBF, accepted the check and challenged Mississippians to serve as volunteers in monthly CBF missions projects in the Delta, on the third Saturday of each month starting in January 2001.

Workshop sessions were led by seven Mississippians who spent their summer teaching English in China: Will Carter, director of the CBF-supported Friends of New Churches; John Landrum, CBF-endorsed chaplain to casino employees on the Mississippi Gulf Coast; and Baucom.

About 100 Mississippians attended the assembly. The meeting concluded with a communion service on the Gulfshore Assembly pier.



JOINING TOGETHER — Linda McComb of Clinton (left) and Jim Baucom (center) pastor of Riverside Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, serve communion to Ken Redford of Clinton, outgoing moderator of the Mississippi Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. (Photo by Jim Newton)

## Sermon fueled vet's Bataan Death March memoir

BOLIVAR, Mo. (BP) — John Playter has learned to live one day at a time. He learned it the hard way, barely escaping death from one day to the next during the Bataan Death March and in a Japanese slave labor camp in the Philippines during World War II.

His story is one of pain and despair, but also a story of forgiveness.

Playter, a member of First Church, Bolivar, Mo., told his survival story for the first time during Bolivar's July 4 Celebration of Freedom

in 1994 — the 50th anniversary of his escape from the Japanese.

Now his story is out for all to read. His personal memoir, "Survivor," published by Southwest Baptist University (SBU) Bolivar, is available through the SBU bookstore.

Playter was one of 83 survivors who swam to shore after Americans torpedoed the Japanese ship Shinyo Maru carrying him and hundreds of other prisoners from the Philippines to Japan in August 1944.

He had been in captivity since April 1942 — captivity that included seeing comrades severely beaten or killed by Japanese soldiers while marching for several days on what became known as the Bataan Death March. Captivity that forced him to labor in rice fields, sleep with bugs crawling on his body, suffer several near-death bouts of malaria, dysentery, and starvation.

However, one thing never changed — his faith in God.

His and the other soldiers' loyalty to their country never faltered, either. "One of the moments I remember most is in the barracks after coming in from the rice fields, when a soldier pulled out an American flag. It was a very moving experience to see the flag after only seeing the Japanese flag for so long. It was a tearful moment for us."

After escaping death on the Japanese ship, Playter returned home to Missouri where he was placed in a military hospital in Springfield. It was there he met the woman who would become his wife, Charlene.

They married in October 1945. He worked with the Army in Springfield until November 1945 before moving to New Mexico and picking up his original career in geology.

John and Charlene eventual-

ly moved back to Bolivar to operate a family farm. They had two daughters. He retired in 1986 after 25 years as city engineer. Charlene died in 1983.

His account might never have been known if it hadn't been for a sermon on forgiveness preached by Ray Leininger, pastor of First Church, Bolivar.

"That sermon on forgiveness made me realize that I could not continue to hate the Japanese and love our Lord," he recalled.

"Fifty years later, I have forgiven the Japanese for what they did to me. I was so bitter within for all those years, but I didn't really concentrate on it. It hasn't been easy to tell my story."

His book sells for \$12.81 (tax included) plus \$6 shipping and handling. It can be ordered by calling the SBU bookstore at (417) 328-1530.



Playter

# 1000-plus Acteens Activators share Christ

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — More than 1,000 Acteens Activators and Acteens Activators Abroad will never forget Puerto Rico, Brazil, England, Australia, Charleston, S.C., the District of Columbia, or the 24 other sites where they went to volunteer during this past summer.

Acteens Activators and Acteens Activators Abroad are favorites with teenaged girls involved in Acteens, the organization for girls in grades seven through 12 sponsored by Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). The volunteer programs allow the teens to have hands-on experience in missions in the States and overseas.

Through WMU's Volunteer Connection, Activator groups are matched with a North American or international missionary who needs the kind of ministry the Acteens group can provide. Each Activator team is connected with a local supervisor who gives the specific missions assignment and handles arrangements directly from the mission site.

During the past summer, 94 Acteens Activator teams, totaling 1,040 teens and leaders from 21 states connected with missionaries to do migrant camps, hospitality missions, construction and home repair, Vacation Bible School, resort ministries, or whatever was needed to help the missionaries. Tennessee and Alabama led the states in the total number of teams with 18 and 14, respectively.

One of the most concentrated efforts was in Charleston, S.C., where 170 Acteens served as volunteers for the National Acteens Activators Event 2000, in conjunction with Charleston Outreach, a ministry



CHARLESTON OUTREACH — Jack Little spends his summer ministering to children and adults through Charleston Outreach, a ministry of Charleston (S.C.) Baptist Association. Over 2000 volunteers, including 170 Acteens Activators, worked with him during the summer of 2000 in a variety of missions projects. (Photo by WMU staff)

of Charleston Baptist Association. During the last week of June, Acteens contacted 2,337 people and witnessed 153 professions of faith.

Alabama WMU youth and missions ministry consultant Candice McIntosh attended the Charleston event with the Acteens Activators from First Church, Columbiana, Ala., along with their leader, Barbara Joiner.

"The Charleston workers were impressed with the girls' ready-to-work attitude and their sense of knowing what God wanted them to do," McIntosh reported.

McIntosh described the Columbiana Activators as shy and insecure as they began their week's prayerwalk assignment,

but as the week progressed, "I watched shy, rookie Acteens Activators grow into bold witnesses, compelled to share God's love."

On the prayerwalk, their witnessing tool was a box of snack cakes. The cakes were given to people they met along the way as an expression of God's love. Joiner recalled the bold witness of her Acteens as she watched them hug a man dying with AIDS and saw them affirm a young girl's faith as she stood in front of the crack house singing, "My God Is an Awesome God."

"Many Alabama Acteens will tell you that of all the mission trips they participate in, Activators is the best because they do the planning and the work," McIntosh said. "They are willing to put in the 50 hours of training because it's worth it."

Acteens Activators are required to have at least 50 hours of training before going to their mission field. The benefit is twofold: the missionaries can be confident that what they ask of the team will be done well, and the Acteens Activators leave the mission field confident in their abilities and have witnessed God at work through their efforts of personal evangelism and ministry.

Jack Little, director of Charleston Outreach, worked with more than 2000 volunteers this summer. He said he was especially pleased with Activators because of the diligence they showed.

For more information about Acteens Activators, contact Delane Tew at (205) 991-4097 or email volconnection@wmu.org.

## How Much People Are Worth

I suppose we ought to be used to these things, but I continue to be amazed at how much people are worth.

You've seen the list that comes out every so often, declaring people's net worth. There at the top of the list of the richest people in America is Bill Gates followed by a long list of billionaires and multi-billionaires who have made gazillions of dollars in oil, industry, merchandising, or in the dotcom world.

For most of us it is impossible to even think about that kind of wealth. Then, I pick up the sports page of the paper and read where some ballplayer is getting paid ten, twenty, or thirty million dollars a year for his athletic skills and it causes me to just shake my head!

Are folks really worth that much? The response usually given by agents or commentators is that "people are worth whatever they can get." Maybe, maybe not!

I got to thinking about how much people are really worth when I saw that on November 8, 2000, one Picasso picture sold at auction for \$55 million. One piece of canvas that one man put some paint on sold for a



## Directions

**Jim Futral**, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

record amount of \$55 million.

That is a bunch of money! Now, I am not anti-art, or anti-Picasso; in fact, I thought about buying me a brush and a piece of canvas and giving it a try. I have seen some of the paintings that Picasso has done and frankly they look like something I might have painted.

Fifty-five million dollars is not a bad day's work for spreading some paint on a surface and then it hit me. While I am sure that Mr. Picasso would be proud of such a payday, he has long since been dead, and the words of Jesus came into focus, "What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

I thought, if you just turn back the pages of history a decade how many of the people who appeared on the list of America's richest individuals are now gone?

If you turn back the pages of history two decades you would find most of them are no longer alive. Turn back three decades and probably none of them are still living. Just like everyone else, rich or poor, they die.

So how much is a person worth? God did not leave us wondering about our worth. He told us in no uncertain terms what our value is. Jesus said, in Mark 8, that we are worth more than the total world.

Think about that. If you combined everything that you thought was of value — all of the gold, diamonds, jewels, cars, buildings, and clothes — include all of those things that bring prestige and honor, position and power, and if you gained it ALL, it would not be worth YOU!

A more graphic picture of what you are worth would be to stop and look at the cross of

Jesus. When you survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, you are looking at what God says you are worth.

The Scripture says in Romans 5:8, "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." God thinks you are valuable enough to give his precious and only begotten Son to die on a cross.

It is hard to comprehend that Jesus gave his life for us: the innocent for the guilty; the undeserving to die, giving his life for us who deserved death many times over; the sinless for the sin-laden; and the King for the paupers.

Just meditate on this: You may never paint a picture worth \$55 million; you may never sign a sports contract that would have bunches of zeros at the end; and you may not make investments that have returns in the billions — but if you did and you put all those together, you would need to listen to God say, "To me, you are worth more than that!"

That is one of the reasons why it only makes good sense that you would listen to and follow someone who cares for you so much and truly gives worth to life.

## Homosexuals pressure Catholics

WASHINGTON (BP) — The same homosexual group that protested at the Southern Baptist Convention in June has gotten a frosty reaction from the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights for protesting at the Nov. 12-16 meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington.

Commenting on the action by Soulforce, Catholic League President William Donohue stated that the homosexual group is using "the politics of intimidation ... to get Catholics and Protestants to recognize the legitimacy of sodomy."

Donohue cited an open letter to the Catholic bishops released Nov. 9 by Soulforce, along with Dignity/USA, a Catholic fringe group, and Equal Partners in Faith, led by an individual who describes himself as an ordained Southern Baptist minister. Soulforce's leader, Mel White, is a former ghostwriter for Jerry Falwell and other evangelicals.

The open letter stated in part that the Catholic Church's teachings on "sexual minorities lead to suffering and death for our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender sisters and brothers."

"They actually believe this," Donohue said in a Nov. 10 news release. "Soulforce is wrong," he continued. "Here's why: Leather Fest 2000 is now being held at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center in New York City celebrating '20 years of pain and pleasure' by holding workshops on 'rope bondage, mummification, fisting, flogging, and others.'

"In short, this is what kills gays, not talks on abstinence," Donohue stated. "And to top it off, on Oct. 20, HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo gave the center a check for \$75,000. Now if Soulforce were rational, they would be protesting the center and Secretary Cuomo, not the bishops."

## JUST FOR THE RECORD



GAs of Cherry Creek Church, Pontotoc

**GAs at Cherry Creek Church, Pontotoc**, received awards on Oct. 29. GAs receiving award were (from left) Amber Dillard, Amber Lewis, Lauren Ann McLaughlin, and Katie Robbins.

**Oakland Church, Corinth**, recently sponsored a special men's outreach event, Hunters'expo 2000, at Corinth's Crossroads Arena. The expo included over 40 different exhibitors displaying various hunting products and equipment. The evening also included seminars/testimonies given by David Fortenberry and Gene Hoyt of Outdoor Evangelism Association in Amite, La. There were more than 800 in attendance with over 50 commitments registered.



**First Church, Oxford**, held ground breaking services on Oct. 29 for an education building at a cost of \$5.3 million. Pictured are Tom Atwood, pastor; Robert Allen, administration/minister of education; Larry McAlexander, contractor; Bettye Butler, Paul Hale, Pat Haley, Tony Jones, Larry Overstreet, Syl Moorhead, building committee members; Omar Craig, attorney; and Jesse P. Phillips, committee chairman.

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**Ludlow Church, Scott Association**, held a recognition service on Nov. 12 for GAs, Acteens, and RAs. GAs (pictured, front row, from left) are Shelby Horn, Samantha Fitzhugh, Haley Allen, Shelby Howard, and Kim Patterson; (back row) Kari Horne, Amy Moore, Brandi Callahan, Anna Crapps, and Kathy Allen, leader.

Acteens (pictured, from left) are Melissa Denson, Shannon Seaney, and Lynn Seaney, leaders; and Cleary Renfrow; (back row) Brandi Patterson, Crystal Hughes, Diane Scott, Tina Bishop, and Joyce Johnson.

RAs (pictured, from left) are Brandon Graves, Steven Ray, Dillon Baff, Shaun Seaney, Velton McMillian, and Adam Denson; (back row) David Allen and Jim Denson, leaders.

**First Church, Pearl**, will present TRUTH in concert on Wed., Nov. 29 at 7 p.m. The group will present contemporary arrangements of traditional Christmas songs as well as new music composed specifically for this season of the year. Call (601) 939-4476 for free tickets and additional information.

The children's choir of **Antioch Church, Brandon**, will present their Christmas program on Dec. 10 at 6 p.m. They will present "Free Gift." Renea Rhodes and Penny Carter serve as children's choir directors. The youth and adult choirs will present "Christmas 2000 Years Ago" on Dec. 17 at 6 p.m.



GAs of Ludlow Church, Scott Association



Acteens of Ludlow Church, Scott Association



RAs of Ludlow Church, Scott Association

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## JUST FOR THE RECORD



Younger GAs of Evergreen Church, Louisville



Older GAs of Evergreen Church, Louisville



Acteens of Evergreen Church, Louisville

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**FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC** needed for First Baptist Church of Byram. This is a fast growing area. Please send resume to First Baptist Church of Byram, 7541 Siwell Road, Jackson, MS 39212.

**PART-TIME MUSIC DIRECTOR.** Send resume to Trinity Baptist Church, 2610 Napoleon Ave., Pearl, MS 39208.

**ENON BAPTIST CHURCH,** Walthall County, is seeking to fill two part-time staff positions. Persons interested in serving as either minister of music or minister of youth should send resumes to the attention of the applicable search committee and addressed to: Enon Baptist Church, 1451 Hwy. 583 N., Jayess, MS 39641.

**FULL-TIME PASTOR NEEDED.** Send resume to First Baptist Church of McClain, P.O. Box 69, McLain, MS 39456.

**Evergreen Church, Louisville**, recently held its awards ceremony for GAs, Acteens, RAs, and youth Brotherhood.

Younger GAs (pictured, from left, front row) are Rachael Peeples and Paulina Vaughn; (back row) Jessica McDill, Anna Claire Peeples, Beth Papalambros, Kristin Davis, and Renee' Johns, teacher.

Older GAs (pictured, from left, front row) are Ayla Vaughn and Brittany Stanton; (back row) Chelsea Eaves, Paige Papalambros, and Alicia Cole, teacher.

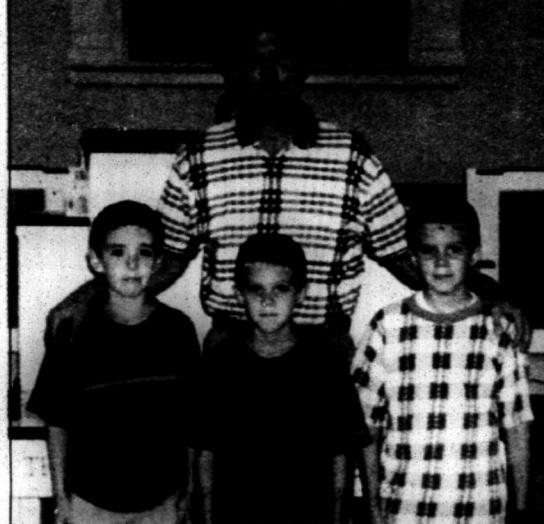
Acteens (pictured, front row) are Sarah Peeples and Courtney Partridge; (back row) Wanda Reed, teacher; Laura Foster; Kayla Shumaker; Daphne Partridge, teacher; and Hope McDill.

RAs (pictured) are Michael Johns, Josh Johns, Phillip Johns, and Greg Peeples, teacher. Not pictured is Chris Childs, teacher.

Youth Brotherhood (pictured, front row) are Trey McDaniel, Shannon Cole, teacher; Phillip Foster; and Hardy Joiner; (back row) Zack Johns, Daniel Cole, and Joey Reed.

**RAs of Woodland Hills Church, Jackson**, buried several items including notes from their parents, newspapers, photographs, RA T-shirt, and other memorabilia in 1990. On July 29, 2000, the boys dug up the time capsule and opened it. One of the highlights for the boys was reading the letters written by their parents ten years earlier. Pictured, in 1990 before burying the time capsule, are Ryan Turman, Scott Watson, Lane Oswalt, Billy Carlyle, Spencer Battle, Nicholas Little, Scott Prather, Jeremy Bounds, Robert Clawson, and William Twiner; David Townsend, Roger Moore, Mark Meredith, and Mickey Little.

**Concord Church, Bruce**, will celebrate the completion of the fellowship hall. Open house will be Dec. 3, 2-4 p.m.



RAs of Evergreen Church, Louisville



Youth Brotherhood of Evergreen Church, Louisville

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RAs of Woodland Hills Church, Jackson (summer of 1990)

**Hillcrest Church, Jackson**, will present Peter Marshall, evangelist and author, in Restoring America, on Dec. 3 at 6 p.m. For additional information, call the church at (601) 372-0132.

**First Church, Terry**, exceeded its goal of \$2,000 for the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions by giving a final total of \$2,029. The church also collected a total of \$1,000.76 on Oct. 8 for World Hunger Day with the Rice Bowl banks. John H. Pace Jr. is pastor.

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4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. (*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

*But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).*

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

## NAMES IN THE NEWS

### Florida editor resigns to join WCC faculty

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP) — Michael Chute, executive editor of the Florida Baptist Witness, has been named chair of the department of communications at Baptist-affiliated William Carey College (WCC) in Hattiesburg, and elected to the faculty rank of associate professor of communications.

His wife, Katherine, assistant professor of communications at Jacksonville University in Jacksonville, Fla., will serve as WCC executive assistant to the president for development and external relations.

Chute, 50, who has served as Witness editor since June 1995, came to Florida from Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) in Shawnee, where he headed the journalism department as assistant professor of journalism. Earlier, he served 13 years as an International Mission Board missionary in Latin America and Asia where he was an overseas correspondent and communications consultant.

Chute earned his bachelor's degree in journalism from OBU, the master's degree in communication at Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield, and completed his doctoral studies for the Ph.D. degree in mass communication at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

### Revival date

New Ireland, Union: Dec. 8-10, Fri. and Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m., period of prayer and fasting, followed by concluding service; Kevin Meador, evangelist; W. R. Edgar, pastor.

### Correction

In the November 9 issue of The Baptist Record, Daryl Oster was incorrectly identified as pastor of Castlewoods Church, Brandon. Oster resigned as pastor of the church in the Spring of this year, and a pastor search committee has been organized. The incorrect identification was based on outdated information in the newspaper office. The Baptist Record regrets the error.



Watkins and Simpson

**Ken Watkins** (left), director of Mississippi State University's (MSU) Baptist Student Union (BSU), is joined by incoming alumni president Allen Simpson, pastor of First Church, Amory, during recent homecoming festivities. BSU alumni honored Watkins, who grew up in Canton, for 20 years of service at MSU.

**Bob Barker** (left), a 1967 graduate of Mississippi State University, receives the



Barker and Allen

Outstanding Alumnus of the Year award from Beth Sartain Allen, children's minister at First Church in Brandon. Barker, a member of First Church in Madison, received the recognition for his lay leadership abilities and support of the Baptist Student Union through the years.

**Paul Wilson** is available to conduct revival services, supply pulpits, and serve as interim pastor. He has pastored churches in Mississippi

and Florida. Wilson may be contacted at 307 Government Street, Tupelo, MS 38801 or call (662) 842-0037.

**James Chris (Jim) Burns** was ordained to the ministry on Aug. 13 by Ludlow Church, Ludlow. Burns was called to pastor Standing Pine Church, Walnut Grove. Pictured (from left) are M. L. Wallace, pastor; and Burns.



Wallace and Burns



**Plainway Church, Laurel**, ordained Ervin Yates and Jeff Seabrook as deacons on Oct. 15. Pictured are Yates, Seabrook, and Nonnie Jefcoat, pastor.

## BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

Eleven students at William Carey College were named Presidential Excellence Scholarship recipients on the Hattiesburg campus. Presidential scholars who attend Carey as freshman must have been selected as valedictorian, salutatorian, or be a STAR student at their high school, or have excelled on standardized tests such as the ACT. Presidential scholars who attend Carey as transfer students must have a 3.7 grade point average on college hours earned. Among the Presidential scholars named for 2000-2001 are Valerie Brewer, a history major from Brandon; G. Matthew Johnson, a religion major from Belzoni; Emily Jones, a guitar performance major from Trinity, Ala.; Amy Noel, an elementary education major from Forest; Dee Norwood, a mathematics major from Pelahatchie; Russell Palmer, a chemistry and biology major from Petal; Chrissy Smith, an

elementary education major from Picayune; Emily Snowden, a religion major from Meridian; Pamela Nicole Thomas, a psychology major from Lucedale; Sarah Thomas, a history major from Tylertown; and Adam Paul Watkins, a psychology major from Petal.

**Mississippi College (MC)** department of music will present its 15th annual Festival of Lights on Dec. 7-9, at 7:30 p.m. in Provine Chapel on campus. The service will feature the MC Chamber Choir, under the direction of Richard Joiner, and the MC Singers, under the direction of James M. Meaders. Seating is limited to 450 for each performance. Tickets may be purchased in advance through the music office or at the door. For additional information, call (601) 925-3440.

William Carey College Speech and Debate Team (Forensics) placed second over-

all at the Bicker Debates Speech Tournament held recently at the University of Louisiana at Monroe. In addition to the second place ranking, the Carey team also placed second in individual events sweepstakes and debate sweepstakes. Seventeen colleges and universities from five states competed in the tournament including Tulane University, Arkansas State University, and Cameron University in Oklahoma. The Carey team's next tournament will be held at Cameron University in Lawton, Okla.

The recipient of the United Parcel Services (UPS) award has been announced at William Carey College. Alena C. Bolin, a junior elementary education major from Poplarville,

received the scholarship and the designation of UPS Scholar based on her outstanding academic record. She currently maintains a president's list academic standing and is a member of the Honors Program. The UPS Foundation and the Foundation for Independent Higher Education allotted more than \$3.4 million to independent colleges and state funds across the country this year. A total of 662 independent institutions of higher education received grants totaling \$2.3 million for use as scholarships from the UPS Foundation education endowment fund. The UPS Foundation is the charitable arm of United Parcel Service, the world's largest package distribution and logistics company.

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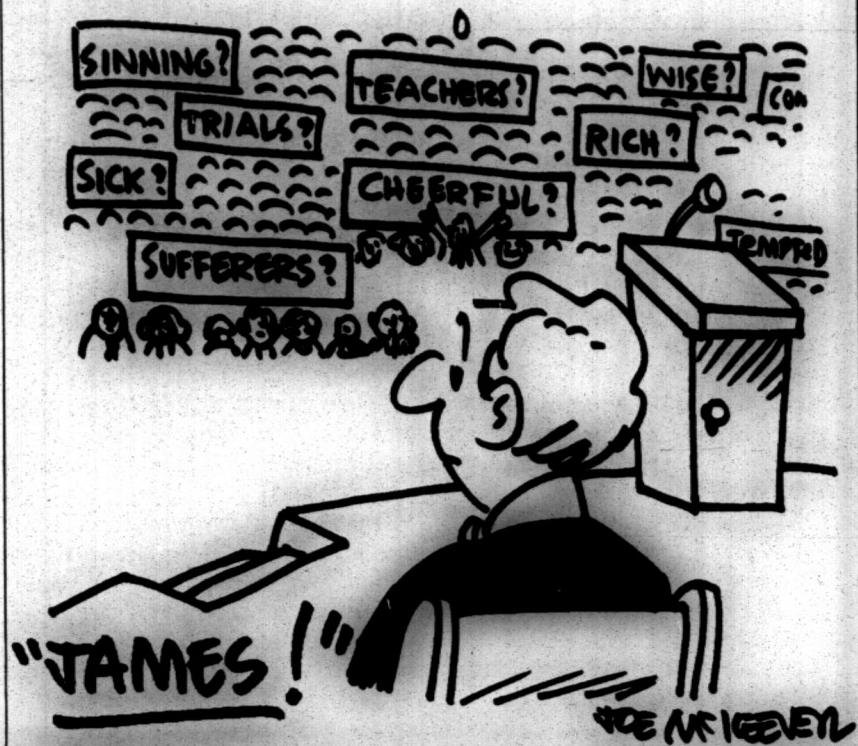
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#### CARTOONS AVAILABLE

##### Editor:

Each year for the past six years I've done a series of cartoons for the Winter Bible Study and made available to anyone requesting them (see cartoon at left).

This year the Epistle of James is the study. The cartoons are now available and are free of charge, although we ask for \$2 per set to reimburse my church for the printing and postage.

Most people make transparencies of the cartoons for use with an overhead projector, or use them with PowerPoint presentation software.

Joe McKeever, pastor  
First Baptist Church  
P. O. Box 1357  
Kenner, LA 70063

#### ILL-CONCEIVED

##### Editor:

The resolution presented to the Mississippi Baptist Convention on November 1, which instructed messengers to encourage all pastors and churches to educate, inform, and discuss the critical issues of this election was ill-conceived and ill-timed, insomuch as the election was only a few days away.

A real cram course would have been necessary to implement this resolution. My perception of this resolution was that it was alluding to the presidential election only.

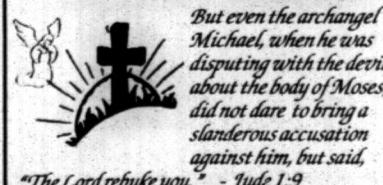
The amendment offered to delete this part of the resolution was correct, in my opinion, although it was voted down.

The function of the church is to teach of a loving and all powerful God, the saving grace of Jesus Christ, the never changing truths of the Bible, and our command to carry the Gospel to the world.

If we instill in our people Christian values, and teach them Christian ethics, they will carry over to the ballot box, and our Baptist people will vote intelligently and wisely.

Haskel Stringer  
Bay Springs

#### Michael's Watch



But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said,  
"The Lord rebuke you." - Jude 1:9

**Michael's Watch** is a support group whose sole purpose and mission is to offer emotional, mental, and spiritual support for those whose lives have been affected by family members or loved ones involved in the homosexual lifestyle.

**Michael's Watch Group** meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday each month at First Baptist Church in Louisville, Mississippi from 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Additional information may be obtained by calling **First Baptist Church in Louisville, Mississippi** at (662) 773-6246.

#### APPLAUDS COMMITTEE

##### Editor:

I applaud the effort of our Resolutions Committee in regard to the Baptist Faith and Message. The careful wording of the resolution demonstrated a great deal of wisdom. We don't need to endorse the 2000 revision or the 1963 version of the Baptist Faith and Message. Keep it a local church issue. After all, that's the Baptist way. At least it used to be.

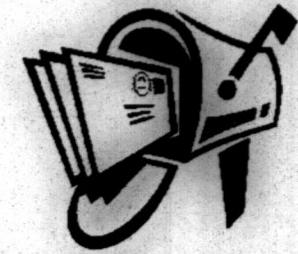
I am greatly concerned that our Baptist Faith and Message is being used as a litmus test for participation at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) level. Don't be surprised if we don't have too much representation on the SBC program in New Orleans or in the selection process for SBC board members.

Southern Baptists have been united by our missions emphasis, not "doctrinal accountability." I hope we can recover this emphasis.

We've affirmed the Word of God as our final authority for faith and practice. What a radical idea! I think we've shown greater boldness in this statement than either confession. Now let's get on with the business of winning Mississippi and the world to Jesus.

I'm proud to be a Mississippi Baptist.

Danny Chisholm, pastor  
Central Church, Meridian



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.*

*Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.*

*Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)*

*Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.*

*Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.*

*No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.*

*When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.*

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# IMB trustees OK record budget, partnerships

## Conference approves name change

The Mississippi Conference of Directors of Missions has voted to change the title of the members of their organization from the present designation, directors of missions, to associational mission director, according to Bill Duncan, associational mission director for Golden Triangle Association in Columbus and president of the conference.

"This decision was made to clarify the roles and responsibilities (of the associational mission director). We hope that people will begin to find this helpful. We realize that the local association will handle these changes as they see fit," Duncan said.

PORTLAND, ORE. (BP) — Trustees of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) unanimously approved a record-setting 2001 budget of \$254.1 million, after the board's chief financial officer noted giving to the Cooperative Program (CP) recently has been especially strong.

The new budget includes \$239.6 million for operating, \$13.5 million for capital and \$1 million for special contingencies. The budget reflects a \$12.55 million, or 4.84%, increase over the board's 2000 budget of \$241.6 million.

The CP is expected to provide 35.93% of the new budget, with the Lottie Moon

Christmas Offering projected to raise 45.79%. The rest of the new budget will come from investment income, hunger and relief funds, undesignated giving income, field generated funds, unallocated revenues from prior years, and other sources.

In his report, Carl Johnson, who is retiring early next year as the IMB's vice president for finance, expressed appreciation to Southern Baptists for their consistent financial support, through both CP and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Highlighting the Portland, Ore., trustee meeting was an appointment service for Southern Baptists' 33 newest

overseas missionaries. The event, held in conjunction with the opening night of the Northwest Baptist Convention's annual meeting in Portland, drew an audience of about 1,900.

During an executive session not open to the public because personnel matters were discussed, trustees also approved a report from its Trustee and Staff Partnership Committee, which affirmed the leadership of IMB President Jerry Rankin, including the board's New Directions policy, which Rankin has championed.

Trustee chairman Tim McCoy of Macon, Ga., said the committee was formed last spring in response to tensions that developed between the trustee board and IMB administration over handling of the renovation of the agency's Richmond, Va., office complex, as well as other administrative matters.

Trustees also approved a staff report requested by the SBC Executive Committee on cooperative partnerships overseas.

Prior to the report's approval, the board's 14 regional committees examined in detail every partnership with other groups overseas.

The report says: "The objective of bringing all the peoples of the world to saving faith in Jesus Christ is not just our mission; it is God's mission as clearly and explicitly expressed in the Bible and in His call to make disciples of all nations. We must recognize that God has called many who exalt the name of Jesus to His kingdom purpose. The task is not ours alone."

It continues, "...it behooves us to coordinate efforts with other evangelicals who have a

conversion theology and share our conviction that apart from Jesus Christ one is lost and bound for hell.

"Much of the work of the IMB is done in affiliation with Baptist associations, conventions, and unions overseas," it says. "These are indigenous and autonomous local bodies over which the Southern Baptist Convention and IMB has no control and authority. However, our working partnerships with these Baptist groups around the world allow us to exert a great deal of influence to maintain doctrinal integrity, and our personnel serve to facilitate the effectiveness of these entities in their focus on evangelism."

The report concludes with a note that the IMB has carefully defined working relationships with other agencies and organizations "in order to protect our doctrinal integrity and the stewardship of Southern Baptist resources, especially in the indigenous churches that are planted and multiply as a result of our mission efforts."

In his farewell to trustees, Johnson, who is retiring after 21 years at the helm of IMB finances, praised the IMB financial officers who held the job before him, saying they struggled with debt and limited resources but laid excellent groundwork for the board's current prosperity and ability to dispatch a missionary force approaching 5,000 worldwide.

Trustees named David A. Stevenson, an associate vice president under Johnson, as the interim vice president for finance and treasurer, and set up a committee to search for a successor.

## White Oak Church, Neshoba County, celebrates 175 years

White Oak Church, Neshoba County, celebrated its 175th anniversary on Sunday, Oct. 1. Morning services featured several former pastors who shared memories and issued challenges for the future. Included were Wayne Burkes, Jimmy Porter, E. C. Tucker, Allen Dees, Tim Robertson, David Hardy, and current pastor Larry Smith.

Representing one of the church's first pastors, E. S. Clark, was his great-grandson, Richard W. Clark. Dinner on the ground followed the worship service.

Richard Ethridge, president of the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission, presented Smith with a plaque commemorating the church's anniversary. Ethridge stated that according to records on file, White Oak was shown to

be one of the oldest churches in the state.



WELCOME — Hal Byars rings the bell to begin the 175th anniversary celebration at White Oak Church, Neshoba County.



Smith (left) and Ethridge (right)

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.  
Minister of Counseling  
First Church, Jackson

I'm afraid my husband would leave me if he knew I lived with a man before I met him, but it looks like the truth is about to come out. What can I do?

If your husband is about to find out, don't you think he would rather hear it from you? If he really loves you and you really love him, a lot of the pain and guilt can be conquered. It sounds as if your values changed somewhere along the way; spend time talking about how that change has occurred, rather than trying to justify what happened. Be honest and answer his questions. Bathe this in prayer, as Satan would love to use this as a stumbling block for both of you. Remember: you are not responsible for his reactions,

only your actions. He may not take the information well, but do not become defensive or attacking. If you do not feel safe with him alone, arrange a meeting with a third party, your pastor, or a Christian counselor. They can help deal with the immediate emotions as well as provide accountability to hold each of you to the task at hand — which is to build a stronger relationship.

My wife blames me for our infertility, but a recent test I had done proves I'm not the problem. How do I break the news to her?

Speak the truth in love. Do not be retaliatory or defensive, like you are trying to rub her nose in your rightness. You

could say something like, "You know dear, this has really been bothering me a lot lately and I wanted to make sure. So I went and had some tests done. Here are the results. Now what can we do?" Listen and be patient with her. Infertility is a difficult issue, especially for women. Seek out a support group that can help with answers. Talk with the doctor together. This is a "couple issue" not just a "woman issue." Projection is a natural defense mechanism for survival. It has its base in fear and anger. Be patient and loving. If she gets defensive, step back and listen. If she goes up in her voice tone, go down with yours. Be understanding, sympathetic, and pray both for her and for your marriage.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. In central Mississippi, Ron Mumbower can be heard from 9-10 a.m. each Wednesday on WHJT-FM 93.5. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

## FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

### The new covenant

Jeremiah 31:31-37; Hebrews 8:1-9:28

By Heather Cumberland

One summer while I was in Florida, I met a man who was struggling with sin. He had lived a pretty wild life and had contracted HIV as a result of his past drug use. The more I got to know this man, the more I could see that he wanted something different in his life, but he was not sure what it was or how he could get it.

I began to tell him about Jesus' love for him. This man had just started going to church and he had a lot of questions. Throughout the summer I listened to and answered his questions. He decided that he wanted to trust Jesus to save him so I led him in prayer.

He thought God had given up on him. He had done so many things in his past and he knew that he could not take them back and that he would live with the consequences forever.

Have you ever done something you wish you had not done, or did not do something that you wish you had done? Have you ever said something that you wish you could take back? I think we all have regrets in our past. It would be so nice to just start all over again and do everything right. Unfortunately, as the saying goes, "hind sight is 20/20."

I am sure the Israelites wanted to take their actions back. God had given them



Cumberland

laws to obey and they made a mess of everything. Throughout most of the Old Testament the Israelites are continually being restored because they have sinned against God.

Through Jeremiah, the Lord made it known to the Israelites that he would soon make another covenant with them (Jer. 31:31). This covenant would not be like the present one (v. 32).

The new covenant required four things which are outlined in verses 33-34. Those four things are: a change of heart; fellowship with God; knowledge of the Lord; and forgiveness of sins.

God sealed this promise in such a beautiful way. He basically said that only when the stars and moon vanish and the heavens can be measured would God reject Israel because of what they had done (vv. 35-37).

Wow! I hope that you can sense God's deep compassion and love in those verses. He is saying that no matter what his people do, God will still be there for them and he will not reject them. The new covenant is based on unconditional love!

As you may know, the new covenant is made possible through Jesus. Hebrews 8:13 explains that with the new covenant, the old one was made obsolete. What does this mean to the house of Israel?

Under the old covenant, the Israelites had to follow certain regulations for worship in order to gain forgiveness. (Some of these regulations are explained in Hebrews 9.)

One of the most significant changes that occurred with the new covenant was that Israelites gained direct access to God through Jesus. Until this time, only the High Priest was allowed into the Holy of Holies. He entered into that inner room once a year to sacrifice a lamb for the sins of his

people. Under the new covenant, Christ became the mediator (Heb. 9:15).

If you read Matthew's account of Jesus' death, you will notice that when Jesus gave his spirit up, the temple curtain was torn in two from the top to the bottom (Matt. 27:50-51).

This was not a small curtain. This was a very thick, very heavy curtain that no human being could tear. God tore the curtain to symbolize Jesus as the mediator.

The Israelites no longer had to go through a high priest, but through Jesus. This is why we pray "in Jesus name." Jesus takes our requests to God in the same way that the High Priest took the requests of the Israelites to God.

Isn't it wonderful to know that you and I can go to God personally with our requests and that he will never reject or forsake us?

Cumberland is advertising coordinator for *The Baptist Record*.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Promoting missions work

Acts 15:1-35

By Wayne VanHorn

Today's lesson focuses on mission work. For some, the word "missions" conjures up the idea of sending someone over there to do something. Many times the purpose for sending is totally forgotten. I define mission work as the deliberate and consistent effort to tell ever-broadening groups of people about saving faith through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the message; telling others is the mission.

**Talk about missions work (Acts 15:1-3).** Originally the church was comprised of Jewish converts. The success of Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey (A.D. 47-48) saw increasing numbers of Gentiles becoming part of the church. Jewish Christian hardliners sought to maintain the "Jewish" nature of the church, insisting on the rite of circumcision (Gen. 17) and a strict adherence to the

Mosaic Law (15:1). Later we are informed that the men who pushed the Mosaic agenda did so without apostolic authorization (15:24).

The insistence on circumcision created a sharp dispute between Paul and Barnabas and their "Judaizing" opponents. The church in Antioch decided to send Paul and Barnabas and some believers from Antioch to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about the matter (15:2). This special meeting is called "The Jerusalem Council" and it is dated around A.D. 49.

Though their ultimate destination was Jerusalem and the council, Luke relates to us how Paul and Barnabas did "mission work" along the way. They told how the Gentiles had been converted as they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria. The "brothers" were very glad to hear this news (15:3). Thus, Paul

and Barnabas encouraged mission work by talking about God's activity. The journey to the council in Jerusalem became a mission itself.

**Champion the missions message (Acts 15:7-11).** In Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas related how God had used them to reach the Gentiles (15:4). Even in the Jerusalem church a group of Jewish Christians insisted on circumcision and observance of the Mosaic Law as requirements of salvation (15:5).

Peter decided to speak in favor of Paul and Barnabas. In an earlier lesson we learned how God helped Peter to overcome his own personal prejudice against the Gentiles (see Oct. 22 lesson; Acts 10-11). We know that Peter continued to struggle with the issue even after Cornelius' conversion (Gal. 2:11-21).

Now, in Jerusalem, with all the apostles and elders in attendance, Peter reflected on his experience at Cornelius' house and how he personally witnessed God giving the Gentiles the Holy Spirit in the same way

he had given the Spirit to the Jewish believers (15:7-8).

Peter summarized his presentation by stating that God "made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith" (NIV; 15:9). Paul would later echo this "no distinction" terminology in his letter to the Romans some seven or eight years after the council (Rom. 3:22; 10:12).

Paul's admonition to Peter in Galatians 2:11-21 serves as a helpful background for understanding Peter's stance at the Jerusalem council on the issue and method of salvation. Peter had struggled with his own prejudice but at last was willing to let go of his past and let God have his perfect way. How are Gentiles to be saved? Peter declared, "We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are" (15:11).

**Strengthen the base of missions (Acts 15:30-32, 35).** Barnabas and Paul followed Peter as they presented God's work among the Gentiles. James, the Lord's half-brother (not to be confused with James Ben Zebedee, the Lord's disciple who was martyred by Herod

Agrippa in A.D. 44; Acts 12:1), quoted Amos 9:11-12 indicating that Gentiles would indeed be a part of God's people.

The apostles and elders sent a letter to the believers in Antioch essentially confirming that circumcision was not a requirement for salvation. When the letter was read at Antioch the believers were encouraged (15:30-31). Additionally, Judas (not Iscariot) and Silas, representatives of the Jerusalem church, spoke encouraging words to the Gentile believers as well (15:32).

This episode concludes with mention of Paul and Barnabas, along with many others, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord. The church at Antioch had sent out the first international missionaries. Now that same church was vindicated by the mother church in Jerusalem and was being strengthened and encouraged regularly (15:35).

If Jesus is the message and telling others is the mission, then we need to keep our local churches focused and unified with regard to telling ever-broadening groups of people about saving faith through Jesus Christ.

VanHorn is pastor of First Church, Columbia.

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The *Baptist Record* is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The *Baptist Record* must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,



no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lit.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The *Baptist Record*, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3390. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

## Expert: don't vote straight party lines

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (BP) — An evangelical political scientist said apathetic Christian voters and evangelicals who vote straight party lines are in danger of losing their spiritual voice in American politics.

"Instead of aligning ourselves with the Republicans or Democrats, we need to align ourselves with Christ," said John Calhoun, a professor of history and political science at Palm Beach Atlantic College and an expert in nationalism. "As Christians, we have a higher calling than being a Democrat or a Republican or even an American. We belong to Christ and therefore we should cast our votes accordingly."

"Christians need to look at the issues and ask what the Christian response should be," he said. "Don't worry about whether it's a liberal idea or a conservative idea. Be concerned about the suffering of your fellow citizens."

"Whatever you do," Calhoun stressed, "don't tie yourself to one person or party."

## Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx  
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NRTD NRT HLTOPWTDNO  
GDW HLPDSTO OEIARN  
NE YPDW ESSGOPED  
GAGPDON WGDPTB SED-  
STLDPDA NRT VPDAWEC;  
QIN NRTX SEIBW YPDW  
DEDT ESSGOPED DEL  
YGBN; YELGOCISR GO RT  
ZGO YGPNRIB, DTPNRTL  
ZGO NRTLT GDX TLLEL EL  
YGBN YEIDW PD RPC.  
WGDPTB OPN:YEIL

Clue: H = P

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Nahum One: Seven.

# Baptist college graduates living D.C. dream

WASHINGTON (BP) — Answering phones. Juggling schedules. Responding to the questions and concerns of hundreds of constituents. All within walking distance of the U.S. Capitol. For four graduates fresh out of Union University, Jackson, Tenn., this is the stuff dreams are made of.

Capitol Hill staffers Jay Bush, Andrea McDaniel, Jeramee Rice, and Matt Thomson have joined the ever-increasing number of 20-somethings who descend on the offices of our nation's capitol each year, with hopes of making a difference and learning something along the way.

Meeting in the Senate Rules Committee boardroom, they discussed their experiences in observing the relationship of faith and power.

*Q: As staff on Capitol Hill and as Christians yourselves, how do you incorporate your faith within this political environment? Let's start by talking about why each of you chose to come into politics and what you hope to do.*

**Matt:** I don't really have any specific reason why I wanted to get into politics. It's always been something I've been interested in. I majored in political science and did a few internships over the summers. As far as what I want to do, I'm starting law school, and at this point, my goal is to become an attorney.

**Jeramee:** I've been interested in politics since I was in high school. It's one of those issues that transcends all other subjects — people talk about it all the time and it's a subject that everyone has an opinion on. I'd really like to work in international relations, something overseas. I think I've always leaned towards the chance to work with international issues and other cultures.

**Jay:** I feel like public service is a higher calling, even though politicians get bad reputations a lot of times. So far, I guess I haven't become jaded by anything — the people I have encountered have all really tried hard to do the best thing for those who elected them. As far as what I do after I leave Washington, law school is an option, maybe business school.

**Andrea:** I have grown up watching politics with my family, but I always thought that I'd do something in missions, which I saw as being able to help people on a macro-level. It's a long story, but I think ultimately I will do full-time church work. Though I'm not doing it directly, my boss is working on a macro-level and since I'm part of his team, I'm also part of the effort to help the people in his district and to make policy for the nation and international relations. It's my way of being a small piece of accomplishing significant change.

*Q: As people of faith, what's it been like coming to Washington and working on Capitol Hill?*

**Jeramee:** It's a big difference when you're around Christians and people of faith all of the time, and then you come to a city where it's not so automatic. Sometimes it's hard to try and keep a positive attitude



CAPITOL HILL EXPERIENCE — From left: Andrea McDaniel, Jay Bush, Jeramee Rice and Matt Thomson. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)

— to show that I'm living for something else other than myself. If people try and knock you down, it's not an intentional thing but I think just the environment that we're in.

*Q: So how do you keep a positive attitude?*

**Jeramee:** I just know that I'm not going to be here forever. My two goals when I leave here are to have people say he smiled a lot and he's a nice guy, and I hope they realize that it's not anything that's me but the One who is living inside of me.

**Andrea:** I've found that it's been just as easy for me to pursue my walk with Christ here because of the great church I've been able to plug into. I go to Capitol Hill Baptist and it's there that I've found people who are involved not only in Capitol Hill but other government agencies and businesses just like any other city. I've found that the people that I've encountered here and the friends I've made — even if they're not Christians — these are people who are looking to be a part of a bigger picture.

*Q: It seems that the overall perception of Washington and Congress by other Christians is that politicians are out to promote themselves and aren't thinking about the people they're representing. What do you say to that?*

**Andrea:** I think that most of the congressmen are here for a good purpose and they're here seeking to represent people. I don't think that people are up here trying to make underhanded deals, but that they're here trying to do what's right. I think they have a genuine concern for the people that they represent.

**Matt:** Self-promotion, which all members engage in, in no way decreases their

faith and their representation of their constituents. If I'm a constituent, as long as I'm being represented effectively, I don't really care whether or not my senator or congressman is engaging in self-promotion. It's a necessary evil that I think is just the nature of the job.

**Jeramee:** I think a lot of the self-promotion by leaders and by their staff just further represents the people.

*Q: What were some of your first impressions of Washington. Have any of those ideas changed up to this point?*

**Jeramee:** I think a general feeling is that the people who have these jobs as staffers are the best and the brightest and in a lot of situations that's true, but a lot of times you can also feel like a trained monkey could do your job. It seems like so many of the Capitol Hill staffers are just out of college and are so young. They're just getting their first experience and it's a great opportunity, but it somehow has lost the aura that I guess I came expecting.

**Jeramee:** Many people don't realize the amount of turnover that is here in Washington. If you're here a year, you're doing well. A lot of offices don't expect their staffers to stay longer than six months. Everybody has this idea that we never work on the hill and that we get paid great, but we could walk two blocks away and get paid much more than we do right now, and work shorter hours. Twelve- to fifteen-hour days are not unusual.

*Q: Do people still vote with conviction? Are legislators easily swayed by their particular party?*

**Jeramee:** Speaking generally, I think a lot of times votes are done first with how you truly believe but also in recognition for what your party needs. If your party is going to pass something with a huge majority and it's something you just don't agree with, then you can take the hit and vote against the party. You definitely have to have your argument for and against it at the very onset and know why you believe the way you've voted. Especially because of the way news is communicated now, with e-mail, etc., you can be sure that you're going to get a response the very next day.

*Q: One last question — among people in your generation, is there growing interest in politics?*

**Jay:** I don't think there is among people our age. I wish there would be because I think there are a lot of issues that affect people our age that don't get much coverage or attention by members of Congress because the people who are calling in are middle-age or senior citizens.

**Matt:** People think they're involved when they become passionate about popular issues. They seem to pick and choose, because it seems cool to be for something. I think people who are truly active are active across the board. Unfortunately, those numbers are kind of few when it comes to the younger generation.